

South Dakota Character Education



SD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

January, 2005

“The lessons for us as teachers and parents? First, to provide young people with opportunities to think about and set worthwhile goals that will develop their character and give them the sense of purpose that every young person needs. Second, to model that process ourselves, so that young people have adults in their lives who are visibly committed to high ideals and engaged in actualizing them more fully”

Tom Lickona

Teaching Good Judgment

An excerpt from Tom Lickona's book, *Character Matters*

“Teaching good judgment” to our children, as the adults in their lives, is #7 on the list of principles, grounded in research, that Tom Lickona puts forth in his newest book, *Character Matters*:

Good judgment is a big part of good character. Helping our children become thoughtful decision makers goes beyond conscience formation (directly teaching what's right and wrong and why). Developing our kid's decision-making skills means teaching them certain questions or “tests” they can use to evaluate any given behavior. Should I let this person copy my homework? Go to a party that I know my parents won't approve of? Tell less than the whole truth if they ask where I have been? Participate in gossiping about a kid at school that my friends don't

like? Kid's, of course, won't apply all these tests to every moral decision they make. But even if they apply some of them, they'll make better decisions than if they act on impulse or without considered judgment. Here are nine ethical tests we can teach our children to apply:

1. **The Golden Rule (reversibility) test:** Would I want people to do this to me?
2. **The fairness test:** Is this fair to everybody who might be affected by what I say or do? Who might be affected and how?
3. **The what-if-everyone-did-this test:** Would I like it if everyone else did this? Would I want to live in that kind of world?
4. **The truth test:** Does this

action represent the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

5. **The parents test:** How would my parents feel if they found out I did this? What advice would they give me if I asked them if I should do it?
6. **The religion test:** Does this go against my religion?
7. **The conscience test:** Does this go against my conscience? Will I feel guilty afterward?
8. **The consequences test:** Might this have bad consequences, such as damage to relationships or loss of respect, now or in the future? Might I come to regret doing this?
9. **The front-page test:** How would I feel if my action were reported on the front page of my hometown paper?

SERVICE LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Teen Connect is an intergenerational project that matches high school students to older isolated elderly in the community. The idea was proposed by a student at Pine Crest school in Florida. The project is a win-win opportunity for both the high school student volunteers and the seniors they serve. Teen Connect volunteer members contact homebound, isolated older people by phone, which reduces their loneliness; and, student volunteers learn about issues of aging, civic responsibility, and the importance of caring for all people regardless of age or disability. You can find out more about this program on the internet.

SECOND ANNUAL CHARACTER EDUCATION CONFERENCE SCHEDULED

June 20-21, 2005
Ramkota Convention Center, Pierre,
SD

Keynote speakers:
Dr. Phil Vincent and
Charlie Abourjilie

**PUT THIS ON YOUR
CALENDER.**

SD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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WE ARE ON THE WEB:

www.state.sd.us/deca/CSCF/CEP/

- Current newsletter
- Resources and other links
- Student opportunities
- Professional development

THE SD PARTNERSHIPS:

The South Dakota Character Education Partnership grant was received during the summer of 2001. The goals for the grant are:

- To establish high quality character education implementation sites that embrace the virtues that are embodied in SD Code, as well as other character traits identified by the local community, in a manner which effectively models the principles of good character through the actions of school staff and students.
- To develop the lifelong skills and ethical behaviors necessary to be contributing citizens in a democratic society by integrating character education practices within the total school and community.
- To effectively link existing local, state and federal resources that merge effective school research and character development in a caring community.
- To maintain or improve student academic achievement while expanding student understanding of, commitment to, and action upon core ethical values.

Contact people for the 10 partnership districts:

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Ideas that work:

Bulletin Board Ideas:

- Title: "Do We Respect our Environment?" Add the words "Reduce", "Reuse", and "Recycle" and show pictures of ways each can be done.
- Title: "Take the Initiative—Find the Answer: "Then have questions on the board that students have asked or that you have thought of, such as, "Why does a cake rise in the oven?" or "How many kids have graduated from our high school?" etc. Leave room for an answer.
- Title: "What Could Have Made this person Happy?" Have a large picture of someone with a happy face. Have room on the board for students to add comments about what might have made this person happy.
- Title: "Thanks you" Put an extra-large greeting card on the board upon which students can write an individual thank you to others. .Dotson&Wisont

LOVE:

a place of safety and
Security.

AFFECTION:

a place of warmth.

RESPECT:

a place where the mind
and spirit can flourish.

Steve Goodier

Interesting Research:

Experiments offering money in exchange for creative solutions to problems find that monetary rewards are unrelated to the capacity of people to offer original ideas. Instead, creativity is most frequently the product of genuine interest in the problem and a belief that creativity will be personally appreciated by superiors.

Cooper, Clasen, Silva-Jalonen, and Butler 1999

